

News Release

Senator Pete V. Domenici

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DOMENICI REACHES AGREEMENT ON CENTRALIZED DIRECTED ENERGY PROGRAM

WASHINGTON -- U.S. Senator Pete Domenici's initiative to consolidate all U.S. directed energy defense programs took a step forward today when he and the Senate Armed Services Committee agreed to an amendment to better manage the Defense Department's directed energy technologies, systems and weapons.

The Senate subsequently approved the Domenici's amendment, adding it to the FY2001 Defense Authorization Bill will be accepted as the Senate continues to craft the bill. The agreement was made between Domenici and Senator John Warner, the Armed Services Committee chairman and manager of the **FY2001 Defense Authorization Bill**. Senator Jeff Bingaman cosponsored the amendment.

The amendment agreed to by Warner authorizes \$50 million and essentially mandates the Pentagon implement the management structure for directed energy programs outlined in the *High Energy Laser Master Plan* released by the Pentagon in March.

The legislation fundamentally determines that Kirtland Air Force Base in Albuquerque, more than any other defense facility, fits the criteria to host the Joint Technology Office, a central part of the Pentagon's new Directed Energy management structure.

"I am grateful to Senator Warner for agreeing to this move to greatly improve the management and scope of the directed energy program," Domenici said. "I am quite certain that Kirtland is the most logical and suitable home for this consolidated effort. I also have no doubt that the Secretary of Defense will locate the Joint Technology Office in New Mexico."

"New Mexico fits the bill for a centralized directed energy effort, but the benefits to national security are paramount and well served by this move," he said.

The amendment gives the Defense Secretary until Oct. 1 to locate the Joint Technology Office at a location that conducts "a substantial proportion of the directed energy research, development, test and evaluation" activities of the Defense Department. The legislation also defines directed energy as including both lasers and high power microwaves, leaving Kirtland as the only location readily fitting that description.

In addition, the amendment underscores the importance of **White Sands Missile Range** (WSMR) in directed energy, and encourages the modernization of the High Energy Laser Test Facility at WSMR in order to enhance the test and evaluation capabilities of the Defense Department with respect to directed energy weapons.

Finally, the amendment directs the Pentagon to evaluate the feasibility of entering into cooperative programs or activities with other federal agencies--including the Department of Energy's national laboratories, institutions of higher education, and the private sector for enhancing the programs, projects and activities related to directed energy technologies, weapons, and systems.

This authorizing amendment follows Domenici's success at adding \$50 million to the **FY2001 Defense Appropriations Bill** for directed energy research, development, test and evaluation (RDT&E) to support programs selected within a consolidated and coordinated Defense-wide directed energy management structure. Domenici, as a member of the Senate Defense Appropriations Subcommittee, will serve on a conference committee that will this week begin reconciling differences in House and Senate versions of the defense spending bill.